



HRA GROUP

A global innovator in the diamond trade, engages OKR consulting and leadership coaching to manage growth and change

HRA GROUP

CLIENT

HRA GROUP

INDUSTRY

Diamonds

EMPLOYEES

600

CHALLENGES

An innovator in the diamond industry, HRA Group experienced massive growth after successfully launching a platform serving diamond retailers. To guide their scaling efforts, HRA's leaders hired Wave Nine to help shape, improve, and monitor their OKR strategy.

A family business that had survived for nearly 80 years, the executive team also sought leadership coaching to improve communication and collaboration. The coaching helped them design a smooth leadership transition, passing the torch from one generation to the next.

HRA Group is an international business that touches every aspect of the diamond supply chain, including rough trading, manufacturing, supplying retailers, and more. Founded 80 years ago by immigrants fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe, the founders built a new life and an enduring business that would support their family for generations.

HRA Group is currently headquartered in Vancouver, Canada, with offices and factories around the world. While its reach is global, HRA remains a family business, with direct descendants of the founders at the helm and many family members in key management roles.

In 2022, HRA experienced rapid growth thanks to Dialog, the first-ever diamond subscription service for retailers, which HRA introduced to the market (learn more about Dialog below). Of course, scaling comes with its share of challenges, and the leadership team adopted the OKR methodology to align the company's different departments and guide their expansion.

However, after internal role changes, HRA's OKR program was at risk of losing steam and focus. Rather than just to retain the program at its current level, they realized they would benefit from hiring outside expertise and resources to support both their OKR efforts as well as their leadership transition.

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RESULTS

HRA Group worked with Wave Nine to implement an effective OKR program that touched every aspect of the business. Wave Nine's leadership coaching also helped HRA to improve communication, align executives, and facilitate a seamless transition.

At the same time, as the current generation of leadership, Uri and Sara prepared to pass the torch to their sons, Itay and Aaron, and their daughter, Reut, they hoped to secure the company's legacy with a strategic transition.

The Ariel family turned to Wave Nine for OKR consulting and leadership coaching, allowing the close-knit family to expand their business strategically, improve internal communication, and develop guidelines for effective collaboration.

OKRS HELP MANAGE EXPANSION

HRA Group has long been at the forefront of innovation, finding new ways to serve customers and improve the industry at many touchpoints throughout the supply chain.

“We were expanding and transitioning leadership to a new generation, a process that involves a lot of emotions that need to be navigated with gentle hands. OKRs made sure everyone was swimming in the same direction, and Wave Nine's leadership coaching was transformative.”

Itay Ariel
President

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The company's latest innovation, Dialog, is a service that allows retailers to stock their inventory with a wide array of diamonds from HRA without purchasing anything upfront. Instead, the retail shops only pay for a diamond after a customer buys it, and the retailer is free to return any diamonds that don't sell.

Retail stores only pay a small subscription fee based on the total inventory value they carry from HRA, saving money and boosting on-the-spot sales. This increases profits for retailers, which is why the new business model took off quickly.

Thanks to Dialog's popularity, HRA found itself growing and scaling—adding new staff and creating new departments. To guide their strategy, they decided to hire outside help for their existing OKR program.

Steven Schepurek from Wave Nine partnered with HRA Group to develop the OKR strategy, and Wave Nine's Dullah Allen worked with them on an ongoing basis to:

- Solidify and mature their OKR practice to ensure clarity and energy for all staff on the company's strategic priorities
- Introduce WorkBoard as a dedicated single source of truth for OKRs and strategy execution
- Coach the leadership team and departments to write better OKRs with clearly defined, outcome-based and action-oriented results every single quarter
- Support the team in architecting, maintaining and updating OKRs in WorkBoard for greater visibility
- Develop a digital operating rhythm that involved regular updates, with quarterly OKR reviews and resets to increase results accountability and ease reporting overhead

“It would have been difficult to replicate our results without having an external party holding us accountable,” says Itay Ariel, HRA Group's current President.

Wave Nine not only ran the program, but implemented structures, processes and behaviors that drove team engagement from within. In practice, this entailed introducing quarterly OKR cycles in which the organization would align, execute, and re-set their goals. More specifically, each department would articulate measurable goals ladder up to overarching company priorities. Once set, teams had a true compass to track progress to plan. This triggered a mindset shift from "update OKRs as a chore" to "teams deriving insights from OKRs week over week" which unlocked alignment on a level they didn't experience before. The process now was faster, more reliable, and more impactful.

After working with Dullah for six quarters, HRA Group felt confident enough to take over their OKR efforts internally, hiring a full-time staff member to manage the endeavor.

Today, OKRs touch every aspect of HRA's business, including key projects such as their lab-grown diamonds and their operational excellence efforts. OKRs also help HRA deliver on its mission to provide sustainable, ethical solutions throughout the diamond supply chain.



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LEADERSHIP STRATEGY AND COACHING

Beyond OKR consulting, HRA Group engaged Wave Nine to help them transition to a new generation of leadership. This involved:



Working with leadership to align the desires of family members with the needs of the business



Improving communication and collaboration



Identifying clear procedures for addressing disagreement

HRA represents a powerful success story—a family business that stretches across borders and touches every aspect of its industry. As a close-knit family that built a legacy together, they have a long history of achieving their goals, but they also faced unique challenges.

“Steven was very thoughtful in his approach to understanding our business, and he has put the resources in place to help us manage the OKR process internally.”

Itay Ariel
President

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Wave Nine’s Aria Taddey began by working, one-on-one and in small groups, with members of the leadership team on a weekly basis. Eventually, she began holding mediated conversations between different team members to work toward a mutual understanding.

Their work culminated in a three-day leadership retreat held in Whistler, British Columbia, where they created a new model for decision-making, conflict resolution, and clear communication that is now standard practice in the company.

The leadership training resulted in a new “operating system” for HRA based on:

Clearly defined roles

**A detailed plan for
the transition of
leadership**

**Open communication
and conflict resolution
protocols**

HRA Group now uses a standard process of decision-making and mediation, including protocols for “disagreeing and committing” that keeps the business moving forward.

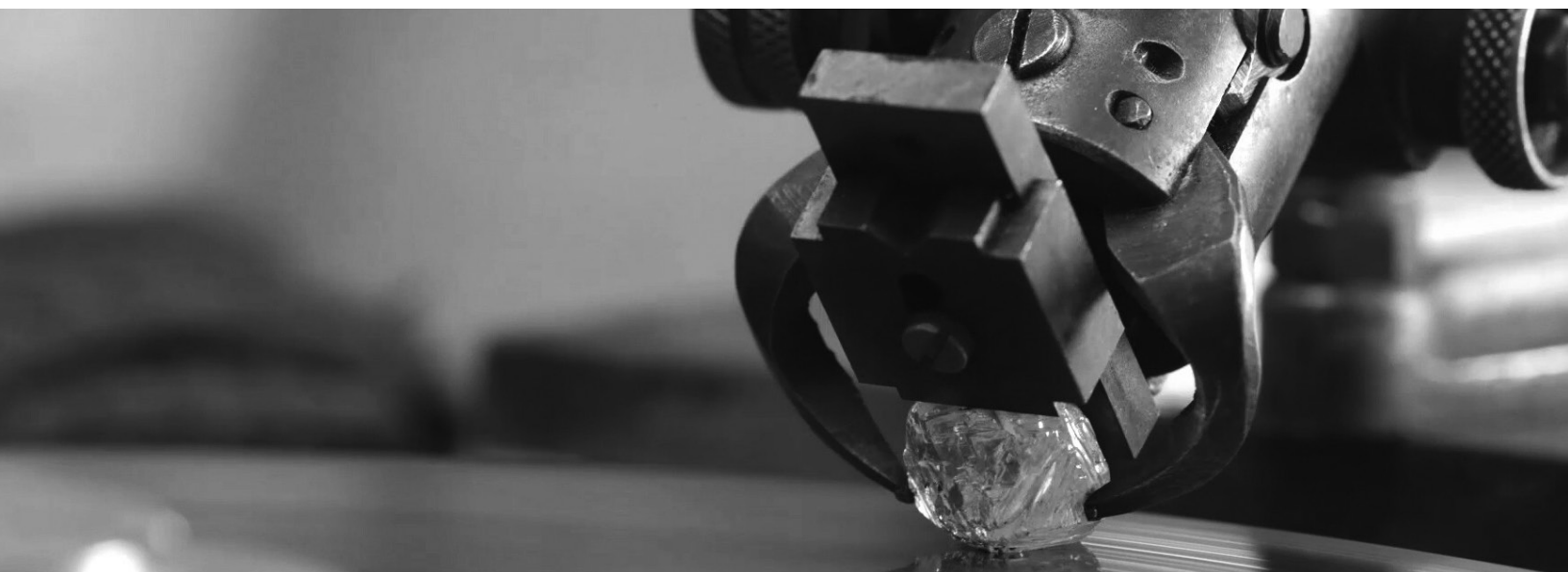
As a family with strong bonds and deep commitments to the business and to each other, they simply needed guidance, structure, and support from an external party who took the time to understand their needs and challenges.

Today, HRA Group has systems in place to forge alignment, encourage clear communication, and facilitate successful collaboration. Aria continues to work with them on a weekly basis to keep the practice strong.

“The value that Aria gave us, as a family and a business, has been transformative. I don’t have the words to describe how well she manages herself in a very delicate environment.”

Itay Ariel
President

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RESULTS

HRA Group's work with Wave Nine helped them clearly define their OKRs and develop a solid digital operating system, using tools and systems to provide visibility and achieve organizational alignment. This paved the way for HRA to manage its OKR efforts internally and continue to create innovative solutions.

HRA's leadership coaching and strategy efforts helped them achieve greater cohesion, hone their communication and collaboration skills, and design a path forward under the new generation of leadership.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Each Wave Nine case study offers a unique perspective on engaging OKRs and improving business strategy. HRA Group's work with OKRs and leadership coaching underscores the value of bringing in an outside observer who can see things from a different angle—especially when emotions are high and change is imminent.

"We really benefitted from having someone from the outside come in and quarterback our OKR work," says Itay, "and the leadership coaching was excellent."

The team's willingness to open up, address their challenges, and take a strategic approach to innovation has paved the way for their continued success. By defining their challenges and embracing difficult conversations, the Ariel family can help secure their legacy and support future generations in the decades to come.

READY TO SEE WHAT WAVE NINE CAN DO FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?

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Wave Nine empowers companies to achieve business goals through the OKR framework and the OKR rhythm. For enterprises fully committed to the OKR process, we provide comprehensive playbooks, OKR templates, and resources that invigorate teams, clarify strategies, and enhance accountability. Our hands-on approach involves consulting, coaching and multi-modal education, engaging executive and teams alike. Headquartered in Silicon Valley, with additional offices in Germany, the UK, Australia, and Portugal, our international team can bring your strategy to fruition.